



American Society of Echocardiography

May 21, 2026

Office of the Director
National Institutes of Health
Office of Extramural Research
One Center Drive, Building 1
Bethesda, Maryland 20892

RE: American Society of Echocardiography Response to NIH Strategic Plan RFI (NOT-OD-26-047).

Dear Dr. Bhattacharya:

The American Society of Echocardiography (ASE), the Society for Cardiovascular Ultrasound Professionals™, appreciates the opportunity to provide comments and suggestions in response to the Request for Information (**NOT-OD-26-047**) for the NIH Strategic Plan, Fiscal Years 2027-2031. ASE is the largest global organization for cardiovascular ultrasound imaging serving more than 20,000 physicians, sonographers, nurses, veterinarians, and scientists and as such is the leader and advocate, setting practice standards and guidelines for the field. Since 1975, the Society has been committed to advancing cardiovascular ultrasound to improve lives. One of the major missions of the ASE is to improve patient care through research and innovation in cardiovascular imaging. The Society provides research funding, research infrastructure, and travel grants. ASE also advocates for endeavors and initiatives that address major gaps in healthcare through basic, translational, clinical, and implementation science. The Society's research leaders are familiar with NIH Strategic frameworks and the role of public comment requests as many are NIH-funded scientists and have served as Members or Chairs of NIH study sections. ASE offers the following comments:

- **Reinvigorate training of next-generation scientists through investment in the T32 funding mechanism.** The T32 mechanism has been vital to the Nation's ability to rely on a strong and well-trained scientific workforce to address healthcare gaps. The United States has continued to be the world's leader in basic and clinical research for decades because of NIH funding mechanisms that promote sustainable research over decades by supporting early career scientists (including T32 programs). The Society is now stressing the particular importance translational and clinically-focused T32 programs that foster physician-scientists and physician-engineering partnerships who are capable of bold research that translates the latest technology or therapy to our patients.
- **Create partnerships with Medical Specialty Societies to develop funding mechanisms and RFAs to address clinical gaps in key areas.** Processes are needed to leverage the combined talent, creativity, and experience embodied in major Medical Societies to identify the most pressing clinical gaps and areas in need of focus. The Extramural Research program of the NIH already has an organization structure within the Center for Scientific Review sections that

reflects major areas of interest. These areas which evolve with the NIH Roadmap each can be matched with Medical Specialty Societies for prioritization of the most impactful research. ASE's involvement in endeavors such as the Accelerating Medicines Partnership for Heart Failure- HeartShare serve as a roadmap for interaction between NIH and Imaging Societies.

- **Expand funding for imaging science based on the expanding role of advanced imaging in precision medicine.** It is well-established that the foundations of Precision Medicine rest on multidimensional “omics” that guide drug discovery and best-practices with respect to implementation. A concept sometimes overlooked is that advanced medical imaging is a form of “phenomics” whereby imaging can play a vital role in selecting of the most appropriate patients who are most likely to benefit from a specific therapy, or the most appropriate subjects in clinical research (“lean” clinical trial design). Research funding that was prioritized by NIH Scientific Review Groups that focus on medical imaging (*e.g.* CTIS, IGIS, and EITA) have been some of the most impactful in terms of human health over the last two decades and warrant of continued and expanded funding mechanisms. “Precision Imaging” research funding not only impacts human health, but also healthcare economics. ASE encourages the NIH Strategic Plan to emphasize multidisciplinary science that accelerates translation from discovery to implementation. Future investments should support integrated research ecosystems that combine imaging, molecular profiling, physiology, artificial intelligence, and longitudinal outcomes to advance precision medicine and clinical trial innovation. Particular emphasis should be placed on implementation science, equitable access to emerging technologies, and scalable strategies that improve early detection, risk stratification, and longitudinal monitoring across diverse populations and healthcare settings. These efforts will help ensure that scientific advances translate efficiently into measurable improvements in patient outcomes and healthcare delivery.

ASE is dedicated to improving healthcare through excellence, innovation, and research in cardiovascular imaging. The Society is pleased to be given the opportunity to provide public commentary for the NIH Strategic Plan and research roadmap. ASE approves the public disclosure of the recommendations and there is no confidential information contained in this document. If there are any questions on the Society's comments or if ASE can provide any additional information, please contact Rana Sharaf, ASE Research & Guidelines Manager, at rsharaf@asecho.org or Katherine Stark, ASE Director of Advocacy, at kstark@asecho.org.

Sincerely,



David Wiener, MD, FASE
President, American Society of Echocardiography